

Mayor's Commission on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Plan

Friday, February 13, 2009, 2:30pm
Council Chambers, Government Center
200 East Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky

Members present:

Mayor Jim Newberry, Chair
Tim Bennett
Rocky Burke
David Cozart
Lisa Higgins-Hord
Joe Kelly
Kyna Koch

Ed Lane
Kathy Plomin
Austin Simms
Kevin Stinnett
Cheryl Taylor
Tyrone Tyra
Mike Webb

Others present:

Kimra Cole, General Services Commissioner
Anna Hartje-Butcher, Mayor's office
Michelle Ku, Herald Leader
Shaye Rabold, Mayor's Chief of Staff
Scott Seymour, Council Aide
Ned Sheehy, Government Relations, Mayor's office
Shaye Rabold, Mayor's Chief of Staff
Dave Riggins, Lextran
Len Simon, Simon & Company, Washington, DC (via teleconference call)
Pam Stanley, Mayor's office

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Mayor Newberry.

Overview of the Commission's Work:

The Mayor's Commission on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Plan is to provide recommendations on the anticipated federal funding Lexington may receive through an economic stimulus plan pending Congressional approval, to stimulate the economy and create jobs for long term growth and stability.

Introduction of Commission Members:

Mayor Newberry introduced the members of the Board: Kathy Plomin, President of United Way of the Bluegrass; Kevin Stinnett, 6th District Councilmember; Mike Webb, Commissioner of Public Works; Austin Simms, Executive Director of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Housing Authority; Lisa Higgins-Hord, University of Kentucky Assistant Vice-President for Community Engagement; Tim Bennett, Commissioner of Public Safety; Tyrone Tyra, Vice-President for Community and Minority Business Development at Commerce Lexington; Kyna Koch, Commissioner of Finance &

Administration; Ed Lane, 12th District Councilmember; Joe Kelly, Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office; Cheryl Taylor, Commissioner of Environmental Quality; newly-appointed commission member, Rocky Burke, General Manager, Lextran; David Cozart, Administrator of Development, Urban League

Mayor Newberry acknowledged the absent members of this Commission: 79th District State Representative Susan Westrom, 88th District State Representative Bill Farmer, Vice Mayor Jim Gray and 11th District Councilmember Peggy Henson.

Overview of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Plan:

Mayor Newberry introduced Len Simon, Simon & Company of Washington, D.C., who joined the Commission via teleconference call. Mr. Simon proceeded to give a preliminary overview of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, which has now passed in the House and is up for a vote late tonight in the Senate. It was stressed that this is a stimulus of programs, not projects, and President Obama says there are no earmarks in this legislation, which is now over 1,000 pages in length. There will be dozens of programs coming to Lexington and will be distributed in multiple streams, using the past formulas to accomplish distribution in record time—as early as next week after the President's signature.

Mr. Simon proceeded to highlight programs of interest to Lexington:

Public Safety

- COPS Program
 - hiring and rehiring career law enforcement officers
 - 100% federal share--actual cost of officer for 3 years
- Byrne Program
 - justice assistance grants
 - anti-gang programs

Energy

- Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant
- weatherization
- recycling programs

Homeland Security

- Fire Station Grants through FEMA
 - modifying, upgrading or constructing fire stations

Environmental Grants

- cleaning up old industrial sites, brownfields
- diesel emissions reduction
- clean water grants and loans
- drinking water grants and loans

National Endowment for the Arts

Employment & Training

- adult employment and training
- youth summer work program
- dislocated workers

Health

- address health professionals workforce shortages
- construction, renovation, equipment for health information technology systems

Community Development/Housing

- Community Development Block Grant
- Neighborhood Stabilization
 - redevelopment of abandoned or foreclosed homes
- HOME Investment Partnerships
 - capital investment in low-income housing tax credit projects

Transportation

- Lextran
 - capital needs—purchase vehicles, work on facilities maintenance
 - light rail/streetcars (projects already started)
- Airport projects (to be completed within 2 years of enactment)
 - capital needs

Education

- school stabilization to help prevent layoffs
- modernization and repair

Social Services

- increase in food stamp benefits
- more to come

The Mayor asked if any member of commission had questions; the Mayor raised one question concerning transparency—does the legislation provide public access to information on the stimulus? Mr. Simon answered that the entire last title is devoted to unprecedented accountability on all levels and transparency measures will be implemented. States and cities are required to post information about funds as they are received.

Projected Meeting Dates:

It was decided the commission will meet weekly at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays in Council Chambers. The meetings are open to the public and broadcast live on GTV-3, Insight Channel 3, and streamed live on the LFUCG website.

Other Business: The Mayor introduced others attending the meeting other than the commission members.

Councilmember Ed Lane had a suggestion to establish a contact person for ideas, names of grant writers, and other information, to enable us to act on a fast turnaround as funds become available to Lexington. Mayor Newberry suggested that ideas and suggestions be sent to Pam Stanley at pstanley@lfucg.com or 859.258.3105.

Adjournment:

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.